

2006 Accomplishments

AID FOR TOWNS IN THE 23<sup>RD</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

A very important part of my job representing the people of the 23rd state Senate District is ensuring Bridgeport and Stratford receive their fair share of state funding. I am pleased to report the following grants and reimbursements from the state:

Total Education Grants	\$170,147,169
Extra 2006 Property Tax Relief	\$4,489,461
Town Aid Road Fund (TAR)	\$1,045,716
Mashantucket Pequot/Mohegan Grants	\$10,047,819
Local Capital Improvements (LoCIP)	\$2,729,093
Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)	\$14,125,940
Total Statutory Formula Grants	\$202,585,198

This funding is an increase of \$6,545,620 over last year's total



With the help of an increasing budget surplus, we were able to make many improvements to our existing FY '07 budget. And importantly, we were able to pass this budget on time and with bipartisan support. We wisely used state resources to make significant investments in programs beneficial to the health, safety and education of Connecticut's residents. In addition, we are funding a cutting-edge economic development program designed to create the kind of jobs needed to keep Connecticut vital and competitive in the 21st century.

We increased vital aid to cities and towns by \$60 million—an action necessary to help keep local property taxes down; deposited approximately \$350 million into the Rainy Day Fund; and fully funded the state Teachers' Retirement Fund in both FY '06 and FY '07 with \$246 million from the state surplus. Finally, one of our greatest achievements in this budget was to fight any efforts to repeal the current property tax credit on the state income tax. In fact, we successfully fought to increase the car and property tax credit from \$400 to \$500.

Energy Efficiency

To help residents with energy costs, we passed legislation last October that exempted certain weatherization products—such as insulation, programmable thermostats, and energy-efficient furnaces and boilers—from the state sales tax. This session, we extended the exemption until June 30, 2007. We also passed legislation that requires certain state construction projects to meet stricter energy and environmental standards. This will help save state taxpayers money while promoting energy efficiency.



Trafficking in Persons

The story of young women being taken from their native lands and forced into prostitution may sound like a movie plot, but unfortunately it is all too real in our state and across the country. These women are lured to our country by the prospect of a new life only to find that they are just a commodity once they arrive. These women are often forced into prostitution or slave labor with no idea of how to escape. Law enforcement now has a new tool to fight this epidemic by making a new crime of "Trafficking in Persons" a Class B felony.

A Message to My Constituents



Dear Neighbors,

On May 3rd, the 2006 legislative session came to a close. Our state Constitution dictates the beginning and closing times for each legislative session, and this year was the shortest possible—only 85 days. In this short time, the General Assembly passed significant initiatives to make Connecticut a better place to work, live and educate our children. I have included some highlights of the session in this newsletter.

I am especially proud that a bipartisan budget was adopted that provides tax relief on automobiles, real estate and businesses while returning money to cities and towns to help hold down local property taxes. This includes an increase—from \$400 to \$500—on the state property tax credit.

Please let me know if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

*Edwin A. Gomes*  
Edwin A. Gomes  
State Senator, 23<sup>rd</sup> District

Stay Informed...

For the latest information on the issues affecting your district, please visit my Web site:  
[www.senatedems.ct.gov/Gomes.html](http://www.senatedems.ct.gov/Gomes.html)



TO RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION on any of the following issues, fill out this form and mail it to me, e-mail or call my office. Make sure to give your name and mailing address and indicate which issues you're interested in. My contact information is listed above to the right.

- ☐ Seniors
- ☐ Business
- ☐ Land Use
- ☐ Environment
- ☐ Crime
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Children
- ☐ Municipalities

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_



State Senator  
Edwin A. Gomes

Legislative Office Building, Room 3100, Hartford, CT 06106-1591  
Capitol Phone 1-800-842-1420  
E-mail [Gomes@senatedems.ct.gov](mailto:Gomes@senatedems.ct.gov)  
Web [www.senatedems.ct.gov/Gomes.html](http://www.senatedems.ct.gov/Gomes.html)

I'm proud to represent the 23rd state Senate District which includes the communities of Bridgeport and Stratford

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# CONNECTICUT JOBS FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

## 2006 Legislative Initiatives

A recent study probably shocked the state with the information that since 1991, Connecticut has experienced no net job growth. My Senate Democratic colleagues and I initiated a comprehensive plan to address the need for job growth in order to steer our state toward a brighter future. Our legislative package invests in education, jobs, university/business partnerships, transportation improvements, and the promotion of promising fuel cell technologies that have been developed right here in our own backyard.

### Highlights of our successful initiative include:

- **Elimination of the Manufacturing Machinery and Equipment property tax** to attract more manufacturing jobs to Connecticut, especially the cutting-edge, precision manufacturing that is critical to our future economy
- **Tax incentives to attract movie companies** to film their productions here in Connecticut
- **Linking promising new businesses to the university expertise** that can help bring innovative products to market
- **A Center for Entrepreneurship** that will assist promising technologies—including fuel cells—develop right here in our state
- **More funding for incumbent worker training programs**, provided by regional workforce development boards, to help workers learn new and valuable skills
- **Creation of business incubators to help grow the small business ideas** that will fuel our future economy and improve job creation across the state
- **Development Research and Economic Assistance Matching (DREAM) grants** that supplement and increase small businesses' access to federal research grants
- **A Business Advocate's office** to serve as a one-stop contact point for businesses to access government assistance and cut through red tape
- **Encouraging more engineering and doctoral research graduates to stay and work in Connecticut** through a 'Scholar-to-Work' system which ensures that innovation and creativity will remain a hallmark of Connecticut's future in the growing world marketplace
- **Partnerships between local schools and businesses** to help more students master math and science as building blocks to careers in competitive fields
- **Teacher 'externships'** that help link the skills taught in classrooms to those sought by employers, and providing opportunities for students to participate in internship and job-shadow experiences that will help them build relevant job skills
- **Asserting Connecticut's position as a global leader in the fuel cell industry** by improving clean energy alternatives in ways that grow jobs in this highly skilled sector
- **Promoting nanotechnology**—an industry that works at the molecular level—to establish Connecticut as a leader in developing complex materials sold to businesses around the world

## STATE SENATOR ED GOMES 23RD DISTRICT

# Working for Connecticut's Future

### Physical Health Needs of Students

Unfortunately, many kids today are not active enough, an issue that has been cited as a factor in the childhood obesity epidemic. A new law requires the state Department of Education to issue guidelines that school boards can use to develop local plans regarding opportunities for exercise at schools and in the community.



### Hospital-Acquired Infections

We have all heard about people who went into hospitals to get better, but unfortunately developed infections after being admitted. A new law will create a reporting system, providing the public with necessary information to compare infection rates at health care facilities in Connecticut. The system may also provide information about methods used to prevent the spread of infection. Beginning October 2008, this information will be published on a state Web site.

### Health Insurance Coverage for Breast Cancer Screening

Early and accurate diagnosis is the key to the most effective treatment of breast cancer. Due to new legislation we passed this year, certain insurance companies will be required to cover comprehensive ultrasound screening for women with increased risk factors for breast cancer, as well as those whose mammograms

indicate dense breast tissue. This law will help more women gain access to the best screening tools medical science can offer.

### Taking a Stand Against Underage Drinking

House parties pose a significant risk to our young people who consume alcohol on private property. The General Assembly passed a new law this session that makes it a crime to knowingly allow underage drinking on your private property or to do nothing to prevent such activity. This legislation also extends the law prohibiting the possession of alcohol by a minor on public property to all private property as well.

### Developmental Needs of Kids with Cancer

Radiation and chemotherapy can treat cancer, but evidence suggests that they may also cause developmental and cognitive impairments, which may be difficult to detect until years later. Testing early in the treatment can establish a baseline, which can be used for comparisons later. A new law will require certain insurance companies to pay for this neurological testing on kids who are undergoing treatment for cancer.

### Campaign Finance Reform and Ethics

We continued to strengthen our ethics laws in response to unprecedented corruption that occurred in our state. Legislation this year prohibits a governor's spouse from receiving honoraria and bans a governor from lobbying the state for at least one year after leaving office. We also continued to improve our strongest-in-the-nation campaign finance reform legislation by protecting the system's integrity in the event of a court challenge and further limiting political action committees (PACs).

### Reaction to Tragedy in Sudan

The tragedy in Sudan has resulted in more than 3 million Sudanese displaced and 400,000 dead. We acted to halt state investments that could benefit the Sudanese government responsible for genocide, rape and starvation in the Darfur region of this beleaguered African country. By joining with universities, other states and countries to increase international economic pressure, Connecticut can play a role in stopping the shameful actions of the Sudanese government.

### Recognizing Our Veterans

The debt owed our state's veterans can never be paid in full. During the 2006 session, the legislature continued to recognize the service of our brave men and women by passing new laws aimed at paying part of this debt. These new laws include exempting disability payments from determining eligibility for certain income based property tax exemptions for veterans, extending the same protections to state service members assigned to state duties as they would be entitled to on federal duty, and expanding the definition of veteran to include reservists and National Guardsmen.



### Allowing Cash Discounts for Gasoline and Banning Zone Pricing

The Senate adopted what would have been a "first-in-the-nation" ban on gasoline zone pricing. The proposal prohibited gasoline refiners and producers from establishing price zones based on geography or other criteria.

Above: Touring the Bodine Manufacturing plant in Bridgeport with Senate President Pro Tempore Don Williams and Flip Bodine prior to a Senate forum on jobs and the economy that was held on the factory floor.

The legislation also allowed gasoline retailers to provide cash discounts to their customers, and required retailers to set prices based on the cost of gasoline in their possession and not on anticipated spikes in the market. Unfortunately, this bill did not become law.

## Roadmap to Connecticut's Economic Future

Understanding that a solid transportation infrastructure is critical to job creation, the General Assembly did not stop with last year's \$1.3 billion in transportation funding that will buy new rail cars for Metro North and make major improvements to I-95. During the 2006 session the legislature authorized another \$1 billion in projects that will help build the transportation future of our entire state. In addition to creating new mass transit options in the New Haven to Springfield corridor and in southeastern Connecticut, this bill authorizes:

- The accelerated purchase of Metro North rail cars so that these rail cars can be purchased as fast as the supplier can build them
- \$60 million to be invested in new rail stations and new parking facilities along the New Haven Line and Shoreline East
- Creation of both a West Haven and Orange rail station on the New Haven Line
- \$45 million in new investments on the branch lines, including improved service on the Danbury Line